

**Submission
No 47**

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Name: Mrs Suzanne Johnson

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Submission on Home Schooling Enquiry

I am a TAFE teacher and have been involved in adult education for 15 years, I have seen many of my students who are unable to read or find the learning environment a very difficult situation to be in. This is because they have “fallen through the cracks” in the public education system or have suffered from poor teaching methods or downright abuse by teachers and bullying by other students.

I have been involved with home school families within my family for 12 years as well as in the community where I live (7 families), and I only see positives for the children who learn in these situations they are:

- Learning at their own pace and in a style of learning that suits them, this is impossible for teachers to do in the public system with 20-30 students per class
- Enthusiastic about what they are learning – this is not something I often see with other children I know who attend the public or private system.
- Socially well adjusted they attend sport, dancing, youth groups and home school groups and do not suffer from the effects of bullying which some of my grandchildren have had to deal with in the public system.
- Very articulate about a wide variety of subjects and can converse with a range of people young and old.
- Have strong sibling relationships and are less effected by peer group pressure
- Self directed in their learning.

The parents of the home schooled children I know are dedicated to the task and spend many hours preparing work for their children, and make many sacrifices in order to undertake the task of educating their children. I believe they are best suited to this job as they only have a few children’s needs to meet and they are intimately aware of any strengths or weaknesses that their children may exhibit, and can make adjustments in the learning process to build on strengths and overcome areas of weakness.

There is close monitoring of home school parents in NSW by the Dept. of education, which is appropriate. I spoke with the inspector who came to visit my daughter once when she was home schooling and I asked her what she thought of children being home schooled and her comments was that it was

the best form of education for most children! With home schooling the state and federal governments are saving \$12,540 (2009/10) on educating a primary school child each year. I believe the government should be supporting these parents by using some of this money to offering training and assistance in areas such as curriculum development. I have noted from the experience of my own children, that all children do not thrive in a school setting, in fact I believe that it is a **very small** number who actually thrive, many will fit in, but will not achieve their potential. The option that is offered by home school parents should be viewed as valid and encouraged as an alternative to the traditional classroom of large number of students and one teacher as a way to nurturing the education of children. I have noted earlier that many of my students have failed to learn much at school and I have met many trained teachers whose skills in teaching are very poor. I do not believe a degree in teaching makes someone a better teacher, I believe it is a desire to inspire and grow young minds that makes a person a good teacher, and this is what I see in all the parents I know who home school their children.

As far as the issue of abuse by parents, I think that this can happen in any situation and many children in the public school system are abused both in their homes and in their schools, but teachers are not aware or have the ability to cope with the repercussions of abuse. I feel that home school parents are dedicated to their children's healthy growth that is why they have chosen to home school, so although it is still possible they may abuse their children, I think it is less likely.

The only negative comment I can make about home schooling is that I sometimes think that the younger children in a family miss out on time with their mothers that they would have with them if their older siblings were at school, however, if the mothers were working in paid employment then this would not happen either.

I am very encouraged by the parents I know who home school and excited by the results I see in their children, I hope you will consider how the government can continue to endorse and support parents in this task

Thank you

Sue Johnson

PS I am happy to discuss this further should you wish to contact me.